



Robert L. Parker

November 9, 1931 - June 7, 2012

Glendive, Montana: Robert “Bob” Lee Parker, Jr., age 80, passed away on Thursday, June 7, 2012 at the Eastern Montana Veterans Home in Glendive. A Private Committal Ceremony with military honors will be held at the Dawson Memorial Cemetery in Glendive. A Celebration of Bob’s Life will be held at 11:00 A.M. on Saturday, June 30, 2012 at the Evangelical Church of North America in Glendive with Celebrant Sandy Silha and Pastor Robert Canen officiating. Silvernale-Silha Funeral Home of Glendive has been entrusted with the arrangements.

Bob was born on November 9, 1931 in Madison, Mississippi, the son of Robert Lee, Sr. and Narcissus (Smith) Parker. He was raised and educated in Mississippi and St. Louis, Missouri. On February 9, 1948, Bob enlisted in the United States Army and proudly served our country for twenty years both as a medic and in Special Forces. Bob served in both the Korean and Vietnam Wars, and was stationed in Germany and numerous places in the United States. Bob was honorably discharged from the Army on March 31, 1968 in Oakland, California. Following his discharge from military service, Bob attended college at San Jose State University in San Jose, California graduating with the class of 1976 with a Bachelor of Science degree in Business and Human Resources Administration. Bob made his home in the San Jose area after graduation and began his career with the United States Postal Service in 1978 as a mail carrier.

Bob married Kathleen “Kate” Ann Gorman on May 21, 1977 in the Valley

United Presbyterian Church in Portola Valley, California. As a couple and later family, they remained in San Jose until they moved to Glendive in 1993 when Bob became the Postmaster of the Glendive Post Office. Bob remained the Postmaster in Glendive until health issues forced his retirement in 1995. Bob enjoyed restoring classic cars and boats to their original beauty. A source of pride was a 1956 Ford Thunderbird, which he brought back to life, something he enjoyed and owned to this day. Bob loved spending time with his family whether it was supporting his children in their sporting events, or participating in family activities and family vacations. He enjoyed listening to jazz, watching professional football and baseball, cooking, playing cards, and gardening. Bob especially liked entertaining at home with family and friends. Bob was an Elder at Family Bible Church in California, where he also worked on the church grounds regularly, and taught adult Sunday school classes. After moving to Glendive, Bob continued to teach Sunday school classes at the Evangelical Church where he attended with his family. He was Chairman of the Redevelopment Committee in Palo Alto, California, and a member of the American Legion Club, Veterans of Foreign Wars and Glendive Noon Lions Club.

He was preceded in death by his parents, Robert Lee, Sr. and Narcissus Parker; wife, Clarice (Davis) Parker and one brother, James Parker.

Survivors include his wife, Kate Parker of Glendive; seven children, Brad (Danielle) Parker of Fargo, North Dakota, Alecia Parker of Rome, Georgia, Debbie Parker of Mountain View, California, Bobbie Parker of Connecticut, Ralph (Doreen) Parker and Carol (Thomas) Walsh of all of Vancouver, Washington and LaTanya (Bret) Schwalb of Hoffman Estates, Illinois; eleven grandchildren, Casey and Zayda Parker, Tanisha (Thomas) Torres, Blair Parker, Sarah, Joshua and Isaiah Parker, Nicholas and Madelyn Terhune and Jaden and Zoe Schwalb; four great-grandchildren, Tyler, Teyo, Trevor and Travis Torres; sisters, Rosa Mathews of Los Angeles, California, Cookie Parker and Lynne Parker both of Jackson, Mississippi; brother, Ralph Parker of Henderson, Nevada and numerous nieces and nephews.

In memory of Bob, please send memorials to either the Alzheimer's Association for continuing research in finding a cure for Alzheimer's disease or to the Eastern Montana Veterans Home, 2000 Montana Avenue, Glendive, Montana 59330.

Remembrances and condolences may be shared with the family at:
www.silvernale-silhafuneralhome.com.

Robert Lee Parker, Jr..... "Bob"

When you remember Bob, doesn't he just bring a smile to your face?

"Hello 'Govnur', how are you this fine day?" or to the ladies... "I'm just fine darling, now that I've seen your pretty face."

Charming, fun-loving, friendly, the eternal optimist, a confident achiever, a natural leader, a steadfast friend, a humble Christian, a devoted family man, Bob was quite a guy.

After being raised and educated in Mississippi and St. Louis, Missouri, Bob enlisted in the United States Army. He must have been very determined to serve, because the birth date on his enlistment papers doesn't quite match his actual birthday.

Bob found life in the military suited him and he made a career of it, proudly serving our nation for twenty years. He was active in the Korean and Viet Nam conflicts and like many veterans of war, he did not talk of those times. Bob

also did not watch war movies after his time in the military. Bob's daughter, Debbie, remembers the family getting audio tapes from her father while he was in Viet Nam, reassuring them he was fine, and when he had leave to come home, he would always surprise them with his visits.

Bob loved to travel and experience new places, and the military provided that opportunity. Bob was stationed all over the United States and also spent time in Germany, his wife and growing young family traveling with him. Bob's oldest son, Bobbie, was one of his children born in Germany.

Bob learned to skydive while in Special Forces, something he enjoyed and later did with Bobbie, and his training as a medic enabled Bob to help others, a character trait Bob was born with. In the army, Bob learned and refined the skills of discipline and structure. All of Bob's children remember Bob helping them start their day at 6 am by flicking the light switch in their bedroom to fire them up for chores. All can make a bed with army corners, and their ironing can pass any inspection. Those disciplines they grumbled about as children, have shown their value throughout their life as adults.

After his honorable discharge from the army, and too young to actually retire, Bob experienced unemployment. He hated it. Bob was living as a bachelor in California where he began college, found a job, and met Kate.

Bob was working as an assistant manager at a grocery store. Kate became employed at the store as a checker, and Bob and Kate immediately "clicked." Bob, with his friendly, teasing ways, was always popular with the women, but he began spending time at Kate's checkstand, bagging groceries. Kate found Bob good natured and easy to be around. They began visiting over lunches, and their first dinner date was due, in part, to \$5 bet Bob had with some of the other guys at the store. It was during this time when they worked together that Bob gave Kate her nickname, KTQ007. Ask Kate about this, she would love to

share the story with you.

Their relationship grew quickly and easily, they had so much to talk about and found much to laugh together over; they enjoyed each other's company immensely; they had a good group of friends in common, life was fun; life was good." Bob and Kate fell in love, and marriage and a family of their own soon followed.

Not long after they wed, Bob began his career with the United States Post Office as a mail carrier. Bob enjoyed that job, he liked to be fit and in shape, and walking his route helped him do that, and he was able to get to know and visit with the people along his route. Bob was very social.

Bob had a tremendous work ethic, and he was also a goal setter. When asked what he saw for himself with the post office, Bob replied "Postmaster General." His working his way up the ladder was a part of why he came to Montana. The other part was that Bob and Kate had friends that moved to western Montana. Bob, Kate and their kids, Brad and Alecia came to visit their friends on vacation. Bob fell in love with the Big Sky State. Bob felt he had advanced as far as he would in the post office in California, and because he wanted to get the kids out of California, he began looking for a "career move." He located three openings for postmaster in eastern Montana and came by himself to check them out. Bob chose Glendive feeling that it was an office that needed him and where he could make a difference. When Bob told Kate his choice, she asked Bob, "What's it like?" "It's Montana!" was Bob's reply. Not as anxious as Bob to leave family and friends in California, Kate and Brad and Alecia, who were in grade school at the time, had reservations about the big move but wanted to support Bob. Alecia, especially resistant, was promised she would receive a horse if she moved. Alecia agreed. Bob, she is

still waiting for her horse!

Bob made the move ahead of the family, and when Kate and the kids were due to fly into Glendive, Kate was of course nervous having not been to Glendive, and wanted to know where Bob would meet them at the airport, would he be at the gate or at baggage claim...how would she find him. Bob just said "Trust me, I will find you." Kate says when they landed, there was Bob standing in the window of Glendive's small terminal. The culture shock began. Bob had come prepared to love life in Montana and he did. It took the rest of family a bit longer to adjust.

Bob worked hard at his new job as postmaster. He loved the outdoor life in Montana and continued favorite activities of gardening, fishing, and camping. He made new friends easily, and opened his home to them with gatherings and barbeques featuring those ribs of his that are deserving of a place in history. Bob became involved with church and community. He always knew the value of giving back.

Bob enjoyed many simple things in life. A favorite time was he and Kate cooking in the kitchen together or Kate starting and he finishing a meal. Bob liked trying new recipes, eating dinner with his family; he loved ice cream, listening to jazz music, and a roaring fire. Bob would burn anything and everything; Kate shudders to think what Bob has sent into the air over Glendive in the smoke from his fires.

But the most important thing in Bob's life was family. Bob was a good husband

and a strong father figure for his children.

Strict but loving, a teacher who expected his children to do right and follow through on what they did and said, Bob set an example with his love, humor, work ethic, and his support of family.

His children all remember the early mornings, the chores, the vacations of fishing and camping, his very vocal support in sports and school activities, the many lessons in self-reliance and doing your best. They also remember a whole lot of love, discipline, humor, teasing, and guidance.

Bob's oldest child, daughter Debbie feels blessed to be his child. Bob was her rock. He taught her to put 100% into whatever she did. She found her father to be a good listener, with a "wicked" sense of humor. When it came to issues of race, her father encouraged her to just walk away and ignore them, and not let acts of race scare or demoralize her. Bob believed in education and taught her dominoes to enhance her math skills. Debbie observed that what was important to her father was God, family, friends, having a sense of community and being a responsible person in and to the world. Debbie says, "I've seen the world from a better view...standing on his shoulder."

Son Bobbie, who calls himself Bob's "wild child", feels his father taught him to be a man, responsible for yourself and your actions. Bob told Bobbie that the measure of a trusted friend is someone who would go back to back with you in a fight, someone who would stand up for you and with you. Bob also told him

that people can take away your things, homes, cars, money, but no one can take away your honor, you have to give that away.

A humorous story that Bobbie tells about his dad is how even with alzheimers, whenever they visited, Bob would remind Bobbie of one important football game that Bobbie blew, and tell Bobbie one more time how he should have listened to his dad and he wouldn't have blown the game. Bob was a sports mentor for his son, and Bobbie wishes that they could have one more game of catch together.

Bobbie says that "anyone who knew his father would not mourn his death, but would instead celebrate his life."

Son Ralph is still an earlier riser, but now he enjoys it. A favorite memory for Ralph, is all the fishing and camping trips when he sat in the front seat with his dad and read the map for Bob.

Son Brad's memories include the Saturday morning chore of Bob making he and Alecia having to clean the churchyard when they lived in California, a chore Brad hated. Afterward they would stop at 7-11 for slurpies and treats. Brad lives in a condo now and just took over the landscape duties because it just wasn't being done "right." Brad remembers his dad practicing free throws with him, teaching him to fish and barbeque the fish, and playing cards and dominoes and eventually sharing beer with Brad and his friends. Brad says his father was strong willed, a great teacher, and patient with kids. He wanted Brad to learn to be alone and be self-sufficient because sometimes in life you have to. In watching his parents work together in the kitchen, Brad finds pleasure in working with his wife, Danielle, in their kitchen. Brad observed that Bob and Kate were "soulmates", and a good model as a married couple. It

was obvious to Brad that they loved each other and were happy with their choice of a life partner.

Kate knows that Bob would have been so very proud for the way Brad has grown into fatherhood.

Alecia calls her father a hard worker, stubborn and determined, and a good provider. Her dad loved family time, and always loved having his kids around helping even if they were just sitting watching him refurbish his boats or cars, or working on a home project. She remembers her dad videoing everything, Christmas and every important occasion, and the lighting had to be just right. She found her dad to be a comic, with a wonderful sense of humor. He teased a lot.

Alecia recalls how Bob loved Kate's banana pudding and would have that on his birthday, instead of cake, on a special red birthday plate.

Alecia's biggest regret is that because she was so young when Bob was diagnosed with alzheimers, that she has missed out on having adult conversation with her dad.

Alecia's most prized possession is a message Bob left on her phone in 2009. It is apparent that when he called, his mind was clear and he knew who he was talking to. That message is a valuable treasure to Alecia.

Kate says that Bob would have been proud to have seen Alecia's determination and motivation at setting her goals and getting her education.

Tanisha, Bob's granddaughter, thought very highly of her grandfather and measures all men against him. Bob would always ask his granddaughter, "you don't love anyone more than me, do you?" Tanisha always had the right answer. Her heart smiles when she remembers being included on trips and vacations, camping and fishing. Tanisha totally loves her grandpa. She admired his strong character and wisdom. He was always giving subtle lessons and prodding her to think about things. Bob provided strength and security. He was just awfully wonderful.

Totally agreeing with all this was Bob's former sister-in-law, Mary Randall. She speaks of Bob as one of three good men she has known in her 84 years of life. Mary called Bob an "outstanding man."

Bob was a wonderful and outstanding man and he had big dreams for Glendive. Not long after moving to Glendive, Bob was diagnosed with alzheimers. Bob's and the family's journey through this disease, was long and had many difficult and heartbreaking times. Kate and the family would like to express to their friends and to the community their deep gratitude for your understanding, your support, your helpfulness and your acceptance of Bob and this disease. All of your large and small un-named acts of kindness and love will never be forgotten.

As postmaster, Bob brought with him a philosophy he displayed in his office. It

was a philosophy he also lived. It read:

Press On!

Nothing in this world can take the place of persistence.

Talent will not...Nothing is more common than unsuccessful men with talent.

Genius will not...unrewarded genius is almost a proverb.

Education alone will not...the world is full of educated derelicts.

Persistence and determination alone are omnipotent.

Bob's life is a study of determination and persistence tempered with love, laughter, and support that embodied his family life, his relationships with God, friends, and community. Bob touched our lives and hearts, and our world is a better place because of Bob Parker. Bob, you are greatly loved and you will be greatly missed.

Tribute Wall



“ *Robert L. Parker*

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